

RESOURCES

News about nature, history and horticulture in Fairfax County

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Autumn Traditions at Colvin Run Mill Historic Site

By Ann Korzeniewski, Assistant Site Administrator



As crisp fall weather replaces the steamy summer haze, the pace of life quickens here in Fairfax County. Residents begin getting ready for the new school year, raking leaves and doing fall gardening.

In the past the pace of life for families in rural Fairfax County also quickened in the fall. The farmers' hard work of planting, cultivating and tending came to fruition as crops, produce and meat were gathered in, processed and preserved to feed people throughout the coming winter.

Colvin Run Mill Historic Site's annual Autumn Traditions program on Sunday, October 14, from 11 am to 4 pm, evokes the tastes, smells and sounds of old-fashioned fall activities. Children of all ages will be fascinated when they first experience these traditional tasks. Among the first things you will notice are plumes of smoke and the scent of wood fires as you meander down from the country store.

► **Autumn Traditions** continued on page 10

Deer in the Headlights: *What To Do*

By Todd Bolton, Manager, Natural Resource Protection

White-tailed deer are one of the most beautiful examples of wildlife remaining in Fairfax County. However, they are also one of the most troublesome. You may have had a run-in, or heard from neighbors about their experience, with a deer on the road or in the garden. This time of year, drivers need to be particularly alert.

Road incidents are becoming more frequent as the deer herd increases in number. While Fairfax County has lost much of its woodlands and open spaces to development, there are more deer here today than in the early 1900s. Experts attribute this growth to deer's ability to adapt to urban environments and feed on ornamental plants and lawns, their high reproductive rate, the absence of predators and restrictions on hunting in populated areas.

Fall is a particularly active time for deer and consequently a dangerous time for drivers. By the middle of September most of the male deer you see will have

fine polished antlers. This is a prelude to the onset of the annual rut period, October to December, when bucks lose their normally cautious nature as they search for does.

The deer's lack of attention is generally not a problem for them in Fairfax County until it comes to crossing a road. During 1998 there were between 4,000 and 5,000 deer-vehicle collisions in the county. Two motorists were killed in the last three years, and many others have been injured. Over 1,000 deer have been killed, and vehicle damage has averaged \$1,982 per vehicle.

The white-tailed deer gestation period is approximately 6½ months. This leads to another time period when deer are paying less attention to surroundings. During the birthing period, beginning in late March, drivers need to be very alert to deer on the roadways.

► **Deer in Headlights** continued on page 10

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Create a Gobbler Gourd!

Families, join in the adventure of making your own unique Thanksgiving turkey decoration at Green Spring Gardens Park on November 17 from 10 am to 11:30 am. Work together to make an unusual bird out of a gourd, pinecones, seeds and feathers. It will not only be a delightful holiday masterpiece, but also in spring you can hang it outside as a birdhouse in your garden. Very creative! An adult must accompany each child. Space is limited so call for your reservation at 703-642-5173. Cost is \$15 per project.



Hidden Pond Folklore

Tales of ghosts, murder and other macabre subject matter unfold before you in the dark woods at the Hidden Pond amphitheater on Friday, October 12, from 7:30 to 9 pm. A campfire ablaze for those able to stomach toasted marshmallows will be the only light, as Pohick Percy tells the story of Dr. Rose's Gold and more. While some of the stories are pure conjecture, others, like the Murder at the Keene Mill, are based on eyewitness accounts and court testimony of the most sensational crime case ever in West Springfield-area history (or Keene Mill Heights history — the area's pre-1960s name). So be sure to sign up early, seating will be limited. Call Hidden Pond at 703-451-9588. Boo!

Fall Flings

Watershed Clean-Up Day



Join your friends and neighbors on Saturday morning, October 20, to help clean up the life-giving streams by collecting tires, bottles and other debris that clogs these vital arteries. Give the waterways in your community a clean bill of health and help wildlife and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay to thrive. Get your boots, put on old clothes and gloves and come on down. Call your local park (Hidden Oaks, Hidden Pond, Huntley Meadows, Riverbend, Sully and Ellanor C. Lawrence) to reserve a section of a watershed that needs your help. Telephone numbers for parks on page 12.

For more information about our natural, historic and horticultural resources and for directions to visit parks, check our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks.



If I only had a brain

Ever been to a quilting bee? A spelling bee? How about a **stuffing** bee? Join the fun at Colvin Run Mill Historic Site on Saturday, October 20 (noon to 2 pm) or Sunday, October 21 (11 am to 1 pm), and we'll help you start your Halloween holiday preparations by making a scarecrow to guard your door and greet your trick or treaters. At our stuffing bee, you will find straw by the bale-full and experienced straw-stuffers to show you how to pull all the pieces together. And you can take your scarecrow home and leave the mess behind. Scarecrows: \$5 each.

Slave Quarter Garden Blooms

A first-time experimental crop is growing at the small garden in the slave quarter at Sully Historic Site. See the traditional vegetables and greens that have been growing over the summer and fall seasons. For example, squash plants provided sustenance and when dried, provided eating and drinking implements for the African Americans enslaved at Sully in the 18th century. Dried gourds of various sizes were used to collect rainwater and others as eating and drinking implements. See them on Sully's Forgotten Road Tours given each day at 2 pm. Call Sully for more information at 703-437-1794.



EDITOR'S NOTE

With this issue **ResOURces** begins its second year of publication. We are delighted to have so many loyal readers. Your comments and ideas have been most helpful as we have developed the publication, and we thank you all.

In response to your interest, we have increased the size to 12 pages to give you even more news, features, gardening tips, programs and most everything else about the nature centers, historic sites and horticultural center. There's so much to tell that we've made more room to tell it.

ResOURces is also now a national-award-winning publication. It was honored by the National Association of County Information Officers as part of their 2001 Awards of Excellence Program. It is clear that, even nationally, the wealth of resources we have in the Park Authority is widely admired.

Finally, we have been redesigning our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/resources to include information that relates to current articles in the print publication as well as links for news, events, sites and a range of short features. Visit us there any time!

Here's to another wonderful year of articles about the special places that are part of our heritage.

Jane Scully

RESOURCES

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To receive your free copy of **RESOURCES**, fill out the form on the back cover or register directly on our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/resources.htm.

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Volunteer Recreates the Wheels — and the Gears...

By Jane Scully, Stewardship Communications

When a boy from “down on the farm” goes to see Paris and the rest of the world for 40 years, sometimes he comes back to the farm after all. And if it’s Jerry Maravetz, who now volunteers at Frying Pan Park, you are plenty lucky. Because Frying Pan has a shed full of old farm equipment that, if and when restored, can tell plenty of stories about life on the mid-century family farm.

Jerry understands that farm first-hand. He was born and raised in Iowa corn country along with his five siblings on the family farm. It was the Depression, and he was expected to do a bit of everything — care for the cows, chickens and hogs and make a little money by selling eggs and the feathers from the geese for down pillows. In the field he drove the farming equipment and, he notes laconically, “If anything broke, you had to fix it.”

That is the straightforward approach born of patience and knowledge that Jerry brings to the machinery puzzle pieces at Frying Pan. Jerry has just completed taking apart and restoring a one-man, one-horse 1923 McCormick-Deering 5-disk fertilizer and seed drill that somehow ended up at Frying Pan. The brilliantly conceived machine has over 1,000 parts — chains, gears, levers, sprockets and bearings — all frozen solid when Jerry began his restoration.

Frying Pan Park Manager Marlo Acock, a longtime farm boy himself, calls the drill “the rarest piece in the park. I didn’t even know they made such a



thing and certainly had never seen one.” Neither had Jerry. But he knew a great deal about later equipment from his years on the Iowa farm. Despite the Depression, these were happy times.

“I guess we didn’t know any better,” says Jerry, “but nobody complained.” His siblings all worked on the farm as well, and still have reunions nearby. Despite their hard work, however, the family lost the farm in

1945 when Jerry was 12. After a 20-year career in the Navy and then as a civilian working for the Navy, Jerry now lives in Vienna, not far from his son and daughter and grandchildren. And he’s back on the farm, volunteering a few hours a week at Frying Pan, the perfect man for the job.

His project, the 1920s grain drill, was designed to be narrow enough for one person to guide between the rows of standing corn to plant a crop of clover for

feed or winter wheat and thus provide “systematic rotation of crops without loss of time,” reads the 1920s catalogue description.

Working from front to back of the wood-and-metal oddity, Jerry carefully took off each lever, gear and chain, all made of cast iron that breaks easily. He took them home, little by little, unfreezing them with patient soaking in oil to get them moving again. When he then reassembled these parts back on the machine, he found that *more* gears and chains needed work. And then more.

As well, the wooden boxes above the metal machinery were in poor shape. The ingenious inventor had placed three boxes across the top, each with different-sized disks to regulate the flow of seed or grass. The last box was for fertilizer. Thus the farmer could cut furrows, plant seed, fertilize and pack it down all at once, “a simple task for an average boy,” Jerry points out in the catalogue description, smiling. Looking at all the levers for lifting and lowering and adjusting, it’s hard to believe.

Yet there it stands, greased, oiled and authentically restored without any welding. Jerry even used dowels to hold the old wood handles in place. The farm manager brings the horse over and hooks it up to pull the drill as Jerry guides it, works the gears and winds the horse’s reins around his shoulders. And they’re off! And we’re back on a 1920s farm, planting the summer crops and listening to different rhythms. 🌸

Preserving Your Favorite Family Photos

By Jeanne Nicolls, Collections Manager



Stains and scratches can impair enjoyment of old photographs.

Paper conservators can repair them, or a professional photographer can make an improved copy, removing signs of damage (below).



What's the best way to take care of your cherished family photographs, old and new? The answer lies in understanding what can cause them damage and how to avoid those conditions.

In most family photographs the image is captured in a light-sensitive substance that rests in a binder layer on top of a primary paper support. Exposure to bright light, high heat, high humidity and acidic materials will cause them to fade and deteriorate; light-sensitive color photographs are especially prone to fading. So protect them from exposure to high levels of visible and ultra-violet light by displaying them away from direct sunlight.

Handle your photographs with care — with clean hands and by the edges. Inspect them for pests. Display and store photographs, photo albums and negatives in rooms where both the temperature and humidity are controlled and fairly stable, not in a hot attic or damp basement. Keep them cool and dry.

Frame photographs for display using acid-free mats and ultra-violet filtering glass or Plexiglas. Archival materials for mounting framed photographs are readily available from professional frame shops, craft stores and preservation supply companies.

Store photographs in archival albums, folders or boxes. Look for acid-free papers and albums, archival quality adhesives and page protectors and mounts made of polyethylene, polypropylene, Mylar Type D or archival polyester. Avoid using magnetic or self-adhesive albums, glassine envelopes, papers and mounts with high wood-pulp content and most commercial tapes and adhesives.

Many old photograph albums are acidic and contribute to the deterioration of the photographs they contain. You can remove the prints from the old album and put them in an archival one or (especially if removing them would damage the photos) interleave each album page with an acid-free paper cut to the size of the page. Albums are a good way to protect photos from light and dust, while at the same time allowing for arranging and labeling them so that they can be viewed and enjoyed over the years.

If you have a favorite old family photo that is scratched, torn or stained, you can take it to a paper conservator for repair. Or you can take it to a professional photographer who can make an improved copy, often removing or covering cracks, tears and stains. Displaying a good copy and storing the original is an excellent way to preserve your most valuable family images.

Last but not least, remember how often you've wondered who the people are in one of your old family pictures and when and where it was taken? Using a soft pencil on the back or acid-free archival labels, don't forget to identify the people and date your new family photographs!

Have a question about the care and preservation of a family treasure? Contact the Collections Management office at 703-631-1429 — we'll try to help you or direct you to the appropriate resources. 🌸



Monarchs Light Up the Fall

"While searching the trees, we noticed clumps of rusty-looking Spanish moss. With the sun's rays warming the trees, the 'moss' revealed itself to be butterflies alive with fluttering wings. At first tens, then hundreds of butterflies did a free fall, only to swoop high among the trees.... New Year's Eve at midnight was never more joyous than when the living confetti of butterflies took flight. The sky was dense with bright orange wings, just like fireworks."
 – Suzanne Holland

If you're lucky, you may look up into the sky this fall and see thousands of monarch butterflies passing through on the way to their wintering grounds in Mexico. This visual phenomenon is staggering. That an insect weighing 1/2 gram would complete a 2,500-mile journey in a few months is another dimension for wonder. To feel that butterfly "tasting" your finger or having a chance to help "tag" butterflies to track their migration routes brings their world up close and personal.

Yet this magnificent migration may not continue beyond the next 15-to-20 years. Threats to the monarchs' overwintering grounds in Mexico and the destruction of the milkweed plant in North America on which the butterfly larvae feed present severe habitat concerns for the monarch migration. Scientists are tracking these travels in hope of learning what is critical to a successful migration. With data, key areas can be targeted to sustain this natural phenomenon.

Naturalist Suzanne Holland's passion for monarchs centers on a belief that people can make a real difference in the butterflies' well being. Her outstanding program on the biology and ecology of monarchs is designed to enable the public, especially children, to have a personal interaction with live monarch butterflies and caterpillars to increase understanding and appreciation of insects. The hope is that this new-found appreciation will translate into action to support the monarch migration phenomenon.

During the last five years, 15,000 children and adults have experienced some aspect of the monarch program, first begun in Fairfax County at Hidden Oaks Nature Center in Annandale, where Suzanne is staff naturalist. She conducts tagging programs both there and at Green Spring Gardens Park. Butterfly tagging programs will be held this fall at Hidden Oaks and Ellanor C. Lawrence parks.

The monarch saga is a fascinating one. In late August, monarch butterflies (*Danus plexippus*) begin their migration from Canada to central Mexico. Mid-September through October is prime time to see them here. Millions of these winged jewels will fly a course they have never previously traveled. Unlike migratory

birds, monarchs do not have the benefit of older brethren showing them the way.

Scientists recently have developed a theory that monarchs have at least two systems that aid them on their migration. First, they use the sun as their compass. But since they fly 90 or more miles a day, they must also be flying at night, without the sun's aid. So the second guiding element seems to be magnetic fields, to which the monarchs are attuned by the magnetite they biosynthesize from the milkweed they eat as larvae.

Many of the migrating monarchs do not successfully complete the trip. Whether it's from starvation, weather conditions or predators, scientists estimate that of the 100 million to half a billion monarchs that begin the trip, only 60 million to 300 million arrive to overwinter in the Mexican state of Michoacan.

Suzanne and others visited some of those wintering sites two years ago. Locals there have long harvested the oyamel fir trees for lumber. The monarchs use these trees in their diapause, or resting, state before they begin migration back up the circular migration route. The harvesting breaks up the forest canopy, and temperatures are less dependable. Warmer temperatures prematurely end the resting state, and monarchs use up much of their energy reserve needed for migration. If it gets too cold, the monarchs will die. Mexican efforts to protect this land are discussed on the our web site listed below.

Back in Fairfax County, Suzanne Holland will continue her monarch tagging this fall. The tagging includes attaching a small self-adhesive, numbered tag to a specific cell in the hind wing. Participants also take notes on characteristics of the butterfly, and it is released back onto the flower from which it was gathered. Often the monarch takes flight, continuing on its quest for Mexico.

The tagging work is part of the regional and national baseline research on monarch population and migration, and is the best way to find a method to insure that these jewel-like creatures continue to light up our fall and our appreciation of the wholeness of nature.

For more on the migration, Brazil's attempts to preserve habitat and Suzanne's tagging program, please see us at our web page www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/Resources/. 🌸

"Friends" Welcome You to Historic Huntley



Historic Huntley

What if you could see the long history of a house from its plantation days until now? What if you were to find a historic property still relatively intact yet empty and full of mystery?

You can visit just such a place this fall. Bring along your imagination and come to the Sunday, October 14, Open House at Historic Huntley in Alexandria, hosted by the Friends of Historic Huntley. The property, a Virginia Landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was the country villa of Thomson Francis Mason, a grandson of George Mason.

The house, built between 1825 and 1830, has an architectural sophistication that immediately delights the visitor. It is on land that was once part of a thriving farm that included what is now Huntley Meadows Park. The current wetlands area was farmland for hundreds of years, cleared, ditched and drained for agriculture.

Robert McNeil, president of Friends of Historic Huntley, calls it "a small, elegant but unrestored property that is in the condition that most historic houses have been before they were 'done to.'" And therein, he feels, lies its present charm. An empty

architectural structure, "when properly interpreted, is fascinating to the public."

From 1 to 4 pm, Park Authority staff and members of the Friends group will be on site to give tours, answer questions and introduce you to the domed ice house, large "necessary" and other remnants of an earlier time.

Take part in a self-directed scavenger hunt, geared to a number of different interests. By picking up clues at the information table, children can search the premises to find different shapes in the architecture. Those interested in the history of Huntley can follow clues to details from past centuries. Formal architectural features are the subject of another hunt.

A popular slide show, narrated by former Friends President Susan Escherich, will be shown twice during the afternoon. A puppet show provides a fictionalized account of the Mason family going out from their main home in Alexandria to the new villa, Huntley. For more information about Huntley's fascinating history, visit our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/histhunt or call Barbara Naef, Resource Stewardship Manager, at 703-324-8675. 🍁

INDIANS OF VIRGINIA FESTIVAL AT RIVERBEND

By Marty Smith, Assistant Manager, Riverbend Park

Shirley "Little Dove" is the daughter of the Chief of the Mattaponi Indians, the Virginia tribe of Pocahontas. At Riverbend Park, on Saturday, September 29, from 10 am to 4 pm she will be demonstrating how her people have lived for thousands of years along the banks of the Mattaponi River, near what is now West Point, Virginia. Even today she and her son Samuel "Running Deer," carry on many of the traditions of their tribe, constructing longhouses, making their own stone knives, bows and arrows and pottery.

The Indians of Virginia Festival was created to introduce visitors to the indigenous peoples of Virginia, the Native Americans who arrived on these lands over 10,000 years ago. There are still six tribes living in Virginia, and several of these tribes will have booths at this year's festival. They will talk about their cultures, demonstrate their crafts and discuss the past and present history of



Shirley "Little Dove" at Festival.

their people. The three tribes present will be the Mattaponis, the Pamunks and the Monacans.

There will also be local archaeologists and experts who will teach children and adults how to use primitive tools, how to throw an atlatl spear and how to shoot bows and arrows. Artifacts found locally will also be on display.

This is a unique opportunity to experience firsthand how Virginia's Indians lived, worked, dressed and ate. It gives children a chance to see with their own eyes the ancestors of the same Native Americans whom Captain John Smith encountered on his arrival in Virginia in 1607. The festival allows visitors to glimpse a way of life still preserved by Virginia's Indians as they lived for thousands of years and as they continue to live today.

For more information on the festival, call Riverbend at 703-759-3211. Cost is \$3; children under 3 free. 🍁

SULLY QUILT SHOW IS ALL STARS

By Barb Ziman,
Sully Special Events
Coordinator



Explore a kaleidoscope of colors and the wares of over 50 vendors as Sully Historic Site hosts the 28th Annual Quilt Show and Sale on September 9, from 10 am to 5 pm. The largest outdoor Quilt Show on the East Coast routinely draws about 5,000 visitors from around the country. In colorful tents and display areas merchants sell antique and new American-made quilts, books, patterns, fabrics and quilt-related merchandise, including stained glass and broken china jewelry.

Throughout the day Northern Virginia Quilters Unlimited will provide demonstrations and talks on quilting techniques. Children can try their hands at making a quilt square. Living history interpreters will demonstrate 18th and 19th century spinning, weaving and sewing methods. Appraisers will be on hand to evaluate your family heirloom quilts for \$5 per quilt, with a limit of two quilts.

Music will be provided by the Dixieland Band as well as the Moonlighters blues band. Food vendors will be serving a variety of treats throughout the day.

Hayfield Country Quilters have begun a tradition by providing Sully with a beautiful door prize quilt each year. In keeping with this year's theme, "Stars in the Garden," they have designed and pieced a queen-sized quilt of English garden floral prints in a shooting star pattern. Kathryn Gray of The Finishing Touch has donated her time to quilt our door prize in a flowers and leaves pattern. Total Crafts in Burke donated all the materials. Sully appreciates all our community partners for the work and supplies they have contributed for the show.

Local author and quilter Stella Rubin, a long-time vendor at the show, has written a new book, *Treasure or Not: How to Compare and Value American Quilts*, and will be doing a book signing at her booth during the show.

"Stars in the Garden" continues inside the house with an exhibit of quilts, old and new. These quilts are on loan from various museums and private collections and will be on display from September 4 to September 25.

Entrance to the show is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors and \$4 for children. The show will be held rain or shine! 🍁

Garden Writers' Symposium at Green Spring

Gardeners, if you've ever entertained the idea of becoming a writer, here's the opportunity to learn from the experts. This fall, Green Spring Gardens Park (GSGP) will hold an all-day garden writers' symposium, replete with wise words from two celebrated authors and two professional editors.

Designed for professional horticulturists, avid gardeners and aspiring writers who want to make the transition from soil to pen, this may be just what you need to make a reality of your dreams. The seminar is on Saturday, October 20, from 8 am to 4 pm, and the \$95 cost covers lunch and refreshments. Reservations must be made by September 28.

"Our panel will share their perspectives on researching, writing and publishing green articles," says Cindy Brown, Interpretative Naturalist at GSGP. Afterwards the speakers will take questions from the audience.



The top-notch list of speakers includes A. Colston Burrell, a garden designer, award-winning author and photographer with a business specializing in blending nature and culture through artistic design. Rick Darke's writing, lecturing and design career evolved from a love of American landscapes. His many award-winning books and articles include his work on ornamental grasses.

The two editors are Adrian Higgins, garden editor for *The Washington Post's* Home section and a three-time winner of the Garden Writers of America's Quill



and Trowel Award, and longtime journalist Virginia Small, an associate editor for *Fine Gardening* who works with writers in developing stories through to publication.

For more information or reservations for the Garden Writers' Symposium, call Green Spring at 703-642-5173. The program is cosponsored by *Fine Gardening* magazine, Fresh Fields Whole Foods Market and Olsson's Books and Records. 🍁

Growing Up with the Parks

By Erin Chernisky, Volunteer Services Coordinator

Firefighter, police officer, teacher. Ask children what they want to be when they grow up and these are bound to be among the responses. Here in Fairfax County, computer genius, rock star and consultant could be added to the list. But what about “farmer?” None of us in this urban metropolis would expect that reply.

Being a farmer was certainly the last thing on Mike Longfellow’s mind as a 10-year-old growing up in Chantilly. But 12 years and thousands of volunteer hours can have quite an impact on someone’s life.

The road to Mike’s future career started just before sixth grade when his parents signed him up to volunteer for the summer on the Farm Chore crew at Frying Pan Park. Asked if he was an enthusiastic recruit, Mike says, “No way! My parents forced me to do it at first, but soon I really began to enjoy it.” Learning the proper way to feed and care for

the livestock intrigued him and by the end of the summer, he was hooked. He continued volunteering during the school year after school and on the weekends.

By age 15, Mike was hired as a seasonal staff member putting in about 30 hours a week. During his senior year, he attended classes in the mornings at Chantilly High School,

then worked at Frying Pan in the afternoons, obtaining credits towards graduation as part of a work-study program. Mike began to realize that what began as a summer of volunteering had indeed become his life’s passion.

Mike’s expansive knowledge and honed skills as a farmer certainly paid off when he was hired this summer as the Assistant Farm Manager. Now 22, Mike has spent over half his life at Frying Pan. Among his many duties is overseeing the youth volunteers on the Farm Chore crew he was once a part of. The parents of the young volunteers say that Mike is an inspiration to their children — a true testimony of the rewards to be reaped from volunteering.

The volunteer career of Jamie Brooks also began at an early age when she visited Ellanor C. Lawrence Park with her family and spotted a teenage volunteer caring for the animal exhibits, cleaning cages and feeding and watering the animals. Self-described as “chatty and outgoing,” Jamie followed the volunteer around asking non-stop questions, and by the end of her visit had filled out a volunteer application.

Jamie’s volunteer work soon progressed from her animal care duties to working at the front desk and helping with children’s programs and camps. The most fascinating part, she says, has been building an understanding of how children think. “It’s amazing how much a three-year-old absorbs!” Her teaching abilities have not gone unnoticed. According to the grandmother of one of her program participants, “Jamie’s enthusiasm for learning is infectious.”

Like Mike Longfellow, Jamie’s skills and dedication led to her being hired as a seasonal staff member at the park. Now age 21, Jamie balances her work there as a naturalist with a full-time job at a clothing store. An odd combination? Not to Jamie. Through volunteering, she says, she has developed customer service and managerial skills that are easily transferable to other settings.

Jamie grins widely as she reflects on her volunteer experience. One rewarding element for her has been watching children grow up attending programs and camps at the park over the years. Some of her former students have even followed in her footsteps and are now volunteering at the park. When asked what advice she would give to someone thinking about volunteering, her enthusiastic reply is “Go for it!” 🌸



Mike Longfellow



Jamie Brooks with summer campers

Volunteers for the Parks Are Always Needed.

Listed below are several available volunteer positions. For more information and a detailed job description, call Erin Chernisky at 703-324-8750 or visit our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/volunteer..

Program Leader: Teach children about nature and history

Gardener: Help cultivate park gardens

Docent: Guide small group tours through historic properties

Come join us! It's fun, it's fascinating and it's fulfilling!

“Volunteers are not paid, not because they are worthless but because they are priceless.”

Special thanks to First Virginia Bank for its generous donation to support the Volunteer Program!

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park: A West-County Mecca

By Jane Scully, Stewardship Communications

The 600-plus acres of Ellanor C. Lawrence Park (ECLP) in Chantilly were deep country in 1971 when they were donated to the Fairfax County Park Authority. The quiet manor house retreat of Ellanor Lawrence and her husband David still had the same boundaries it had in the 1760s when much of the land was farmed. Its natural resources and its historic fabric reflected the long continuity of the property known as Walney, and Ellanor Lawrence wanted to preserve that heritage forever.

Today the park is divided by Route 28 and Walney Road, bordered by Interstate 66 on one side and Route 50 near the other, and Dulles Airport lies just to the north. The extraordinary burst of business and housing development has transformed the green country vistas that surrounded the park. And Ellanor Lawrence's desire to protect the land's natural and cultural resources for public use seems almost prescient.

"It's a rarity," says Charles Smith, Assistant Manager of ECLP. "Imagine — a square mile of green Virginia Piedmont, with its wealth of habitats. It could be a scientific Mecca."

Certainly it is a Mecca to explore. Rich in natural resources, there is also its known history, its archaeology and its potential for further discoveries. Park interpreters reinforce how natural and cultural features can't be separated, how the people influence the landscape even as the people adapt to the land.

Much history of this time can be found by "reading the landscape" to begin to understand the long interaction between the land and its people. Slight rises in the land can be followed and recognized as former roadbeds. A row of large trees may have fence

wire hanging from them, probably marking the edges of a pasture that is now being covered with young forest plants and trees.

Farm gardens at Walney are still maintained, and the smokehouse sits nearby. Several trails convey the farming history of the land. One trail takes you to a deep, stone-lined pit, which is what remains of an icehouse, and on to a sunken dairy with a constant flow of cold water from a spring that supplied water for the original 1780 farmhouse.

Although cleared of old-growth forest for agriculture by European settlers over 200 years ago, the land has been reforested since farming ended in the 1940s. Varied habitats of oak-hickory, pine and red cedar stands, meadows, streams and pond harbor a great variety of plant and animal species.

Beavers, deer, foxes, wild turkeys, small mammals, ducks, owls, hawks and over 100 species of birds take advantage of the park's refuge. The steep-sided stream valleys and rolling forests are rich in dogwood and bloodroot in the spring, trout lily and wild ginger, and even an orchid or two. ECLP has a website at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/ecl with much more information.

The staff at ECLP plans many programs that take advantage of the park's rich heritage. Eight thousand years of human occupation have left artifacts that add weight to archaeology programs. For an American Indian program, participants build a roundhouse. Other programs include orienteering and beekeeping.

Programs for younger children feature activities on birds and berries, bird banding or exploring streams. There are family evening programs in the summer and early fall, designed to present the park in a different way.

Several stream valleys connect from east to west, providing linear corridors for wildlife to travel. Recent bicycle and hiking trail additions bring community members into the heart of the park. Office workers from newly constructed buildings share these same trails to jog and relax on their lunch hours.

"We want to create a community for the people who are coming here," says Park Manager Leon Nawojchik, who notes that previously the park required a car to get there. "The park is truly a precious resource for the public."

Ellanor Lawrence's wish has come true. 🌿



Program participants build and test their own Indian animal traps



The smokehouse at Walney

► Deer in Headlights *continued from page 1*



Driving tips that will help you avoid colliding with a deer:

- ✓ Slow down, anticipate deer when driving through wooded and densely vegetated areas.
- ✓ Watch for deer crossing at locations where you have seen them before.
- ✓ If one deer runs across the road, slow down and look for others (deer seldom run alone).
- ✓ Be especially cautious at dusk through the early evening hours and in the hours prior to sunrise when deer are most active.
- ✓ If you encounter deer on the roadways, flash your headlights at the deer and blow the horn to scare them away.
- ✓ If you hit a deer, don't touch it. If it's alive, it may be dangerous. Call the police.
- ✓ Keep your eyes moving; don't just focus on the middle of the road.
- ✓ A deer is visible less than 200 feet from your vehicle; it takes a car about 317 feet to stop at 55 MPH under optimum conditions.
- ✓ Buckle your safety belts. Most people seriously injured in deer crashes are not buckled up.

More information on white-tailed deer and on the Fairfax County Deer Management Plan is available at county parks and recreation centers and on the web at <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/comm/deer/deermgt.htm>. 🍂

Family “Backpack” Nature Explorations

By Charlotte Albers, Coordinator, Green Spring's Children's Programs

Families who visit Green Spring Gardens Park can now check out a backpack in the Horticulture Center and go on an adventure! Choose *Backyard Bugs* or *Wildflowers & Weeds*... both have been filled with learning tools that help visitors with young children interpret the outdoors. Tools include magnifying glasses, field guides, picture books, finger puppets, maps, journals, crayons and pencils. Young observers can record their discoveries directly into the journal, with pictures and/or with words.

So pack a picnic and bring the family for a fall “backpack” exploration. You'll see butterflies, dragonflies, bees and over 9,000 different plants throughout the park. Your child will experience nature in a whole new way. Adults must leave a driver's license at the Information Desk to pick up a backpack. For more information about family programs, visit the park's website at www.greenspring.org, or look in *PARKTAKES*. 🍂



► Autumn Traditions *continued from page 1*

- 🍂 At the first fire you encounter, you'll find a “moonshiner” who demonstrates the ancient art of distilling whiskey. His copper still with distinctive condensing coils merrily boils over a wood fire. (Actually, he uses water for the distilling demonstration — but you get the picture!)
- 🍂 Beneath its tall black chimney, the blacksmith shop rings with the sound of hammer on anvil as the smithy — glad that summer's heat has passed — toils over a 2000°F coal-fired forge.
- 🍂 A few steps further, a big copper cauldron is suspended from a tripod over a fire. Pared and sliced apple pieces are slowly cooking down into delicious apple butter. Everyone — kids and adults — can help prepare more apples for the pot by using the old-fashioned, hand-cranked apple peeler/parer/corer. You can also sample some yummy apple butter!
- 🍂 Just outside, kids can try their hands at shelling corn using a 19th century hand-cranked corn sheller. With a machine like this one, farmers could swiftly separate corn kernels from the cob to prepare their crop to sell to the miller. Modern kids can take the corn they shell down to the millpond and feed the hungry ducks that live there.
- 🍂 All work and no play is never any fun! In the past, farm families took pleasure in making music and listening to old-time favorites. At Autumn Traditions, visitors can sit back and enjoy a rollicking hour-long concert by the Fairfax Symphony's German Band.
- 🍂 Families can round out their visit to the past by stocking up on supplies at the Colvin Run General Store. Penny candy, apple butter, books, toys and other unique merchandise make memorable souvenirs of a special family outing.

In addition to the fire projects, other old-time activities are happening elsewhere on the site.

- 🍂 Inside the Barn, members of the High Country Basketry Guild demonstrate the ancient art of basket weaving.

Admission to Autumn Traditions is \$4 for adults, \$3 for students 16 and up, and \$2 for children 5 to 15 and seniors 60 and up. For more information, call the mill at 703-759-2771 or visit the website at www.colvinrunmill.org.

Habitat Highlights at Riverbend: *The Meadow*

By Marty Smith, Assistant Manager, Riverbend Park

In the autumn there is no busier habitat at Riverbend than the large meadow located near the Nature Center. Large numbers of migratory songbirds skulk among the thickets and tall grasses. Warblers and vireos can be abundant.

Butterflies abound throughout the meadow in early autumn, visiting the brightly colored flowers of wingstem and asters. The seedheads of indian grass, broomsedge and little bluestem, swaying in the wind, remind you of the vast prairies that covered what is now Fairfax County over 8,000 years ago when this region was hot (even hotter than now!) and arid. These grasses act as cover for the many species of sparrows that arrive in the fall, including chipping, song, swamp, field and white-throated sparrows. Occasionally even a lincoln, a fox or a savannah sparrow turns up.

The meadow is also a great spot to watch for migratory raptors, affording a wider view for the kettles of broad-winged hawks that may soar overhead. During these times a northern harrier may drop down to hunt for a quick snack before continuing its migration southward.

To find great birds and flowers for fall (or for any season), visit the ResOURces Online website at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/resources to search our Nature Finder database. You can find what birds are at a particular site or where the purple asters are most plentiful. This unique feature lets you explore major county parks by bird or flower, by season, by site, by habitat, by color and by abundance. Check it out! 🍁



HERE AND THERE, NOW AND THEN

*By Jim Pomeroy,
Manager, Hidden
Pond Nature Center*

I look forward to leaf-fall time because a better view into the woods helps my mind's eye picture past happenings in the forest. A 10-foot wide terrace cut into the side of a hill may trace an old roadbed. A tree very much larger than those around it gives away a property boundary corner. A grove of unusually large trees or the presence of a few old fruit trees tells of an old homestead. A grove of Virginia pines marks a recently (less than 100 years!) abandoned lot or pasture.

One of the neatest things to find is an old quarry. Early settlers were always interested in the local rock: whether they could get at it, whether it could be cut, quarried, or mined, whether it was good for building material or tool making. An old quarry often looks like a deep gouge in the side of a hill. At first glance it may look like a badly eroded hillside. But on closer inspection there may be no stream or other apparent cause for the missing earth. The sides are usually steep and there will be a jumble of rubble at the bottom.

The southern dead-end of Union Mill Road, not far from the town of Clifton, terminates at a park gate. A short walk past the gate will take you close to a quarry that has been known for thousands of years. Soapstone is found there: a soft greenish rock that can be carved into a pot, a pipe bowl or a sculpture. Soapstone is rich in talc, the crystals of which, under the intense heat and pressure of metamorphism, were formed into tiny flat plates that easily slip past each other. These crystalline plates give the rock a greasy or soapy feel.

There is not much to see now besides a hill missing part of itself. Any artifacts that may have been there are gone, and so is most of the soapstone. Tree roots grope down the steep walls, and it is quiet. But it has always been quiet there. The earliest quarryers used stone to dig and chip stone. The only other sound would have been the voices of people talking to each other as they went about the business of living very close to the earth. 🍁

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 12055 Government Center Parkway • Fairfax, VA 22035-1118

OR: subscribe through our web site at
www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/resources.htm

YOUR PARKS

Here are some of the parks where fall is fantastic!

Burke Lake Park
 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station
 Call 703-323-6600

Colvin Run Mill
 10017 Colvin Run Road
 Great Falls
 Call 703-759-2771

Ellenor C. Lawrence Park
 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly
 Call 703-631-0013

Frying Pan Park
 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon
 Call 703-437-9101

Green Spring Gardens Park
 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria
 Call 703-642-5173

Hidden Oaks Nature Center
 7701 Royce Street, Annandale
 Call 703-941-1065

Hidden Pond Nature Center
 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield
 Call 703-451-9588

Huntley Meadows Park
 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria
 Call 703-768-2525

Lake Accotink Park
 7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield
 Call 703-569-3464

Lake Fairfax Park
 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston
 Call 703-471-5414

Riverbend Park
 8700 Potomac Hills Street
 Great Falls
 Call 703-759-9018

Sully Historic Site
 Sully Road, Chantilly
 Call 703-437-1794

Need directions? More information?
 Visit us online at: www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks

Fall Highlights

🍁 Celebrating 20,000 Acres of Parkland

Wow! A Special Evening for the Parks will be held on Friday, November 2 at the Fairview Park Marriott to mark the acquisition of the Park Authority's 20,000th acre of land now under protection. Proceeds from the dinner and entertainment event will go to support the Fairfax County Open Space Land Preservation Fund. Especially important is the presentation of the 2001 Elly Doyle Service Awards, the prestigious volunteer recognition for outstanding contributions to the parks. Call 703-324-8581 for more information.

🍁 Fall Plant Sale

Rare and unusual plants suitable for northern Virginia suburbs will be for sale at Green Spring Gardens Park's fall plant sale on Saturday, September 22, from 10 am to 3 pm. It's a seasonal delight, and also includes native plants, perennials and shrubs for both the beginning and the advanced gardener. You can also shop for great gardening gifts as you glory in Green Spring's fall landscapes. FREE.

🍁 Equestrian Events At Frying Pan Park

Choose your favorite! Maybe it's the excitement of the Quarter Horse Show's cowboys and cowgirls in barrel racing, pole bending and many other events on November 16, 17 and 18. Or perhaps you prefer the Schooling Hunter Horse Show series of walk, trot and canter events, held October 6 and 20, November 3 and December 1. As well, jumping competitions for riders are held November 11 and December 9. All free, all beginning at 8 am.

🍁 Children's Shopping Days

Mark your calendars now for the Children's Holiday Shopping Days in early December that provide a special chance for children, with adult helpers, to make secret purchases from the selections of old-fashioned and unique gifts at park country stores. Wonderful selections reflect the sites' history at Frying Pan Park and Colvin Run Mill. While families explore the site, children can make their special purchases and staff will wrap them to insure secrecy! Dates are December 1, 2 and 3 at Colvin Run and December 8 and 10 at Frying Pan.



12066 Government Center Parkway
 Fairfax, Virginia 22035-1118